

The Collaborative Coaching Cycle

There are 4 steps in the Collaborative Coaching Cycle:

Collaborative Planning Conference

The first part of the cycle is devoted to allowing the BT and the mentor to discuss lesson plan goals and objectives and to determine the focus for a classroom observation. The mentor also shares with the BT the observation instrument that will be used to assess the BT's progress.

Observation and Data Collection

Using a pre-selected observation tool, the mentor observes and collects data during an announced visit to the BT's classroom. The mentor might also video or audiotape the lesson so the BT will have the opportunity to self-assess before the mentor and BT meet formally to discuss the progress of the class.

Reflective Conference

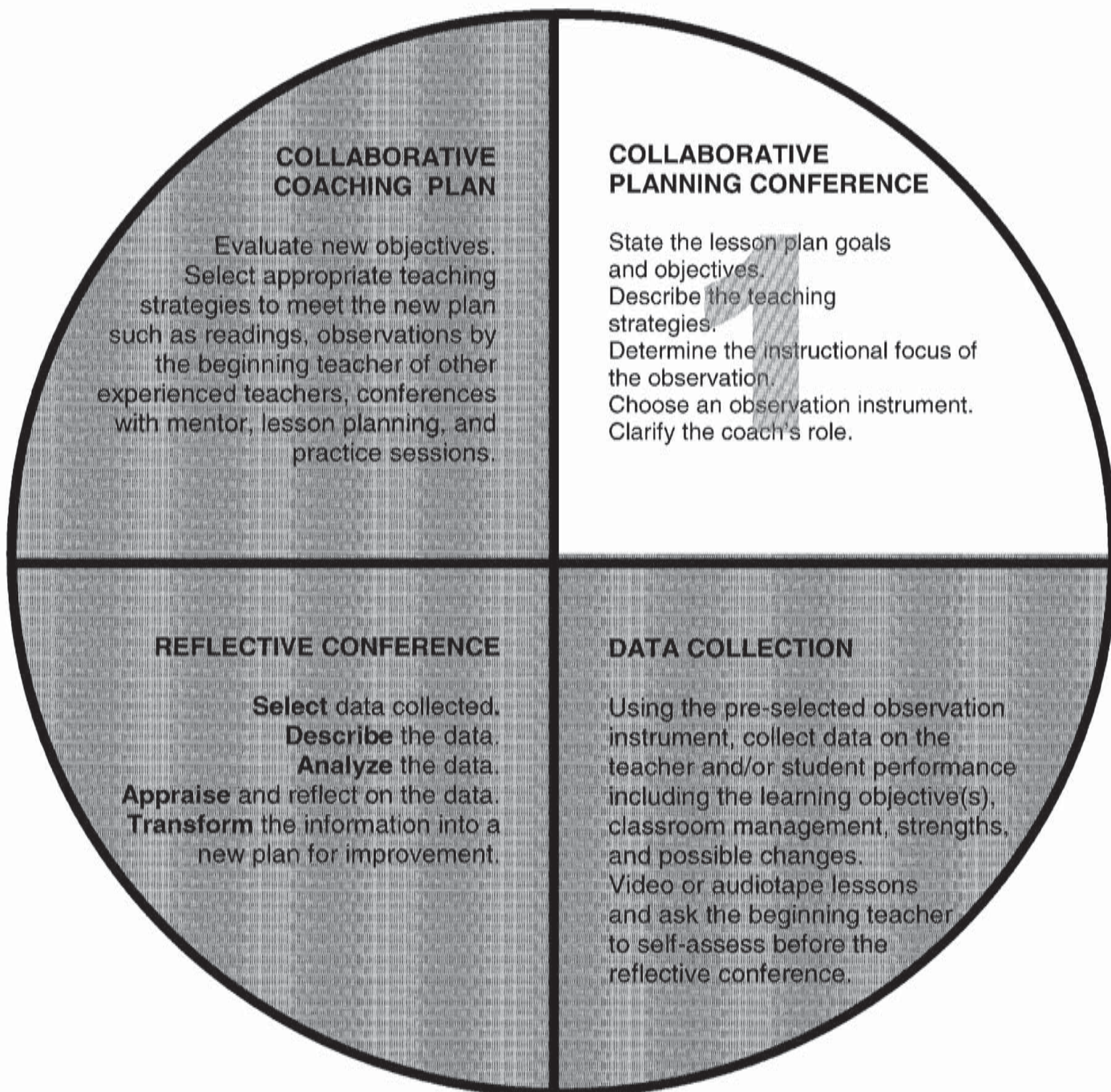
During the reflective conference the mentor shares the raw data collected during the observation period. The data is then analyzed so that the mentor and BT may reflect on what worked well, what areas need improvement, and what can be done to affect the needed changes.

Coaching Plan

During this phase, the new objectives are set and new strategies are discussed. Also during this phase, the mentor provides or suggests resources for the BT to employ in preparing to meet the newly established goals.

As the BT and mentor work through the stages of the Collaborative Coaching Cycle, it should be noted that this is not just a circular cycle but a spiraling one that builds on an BT's strengths and remediates in a structured way the areas where improvements are needed.

Step 1: Collaborative Planning Conference



Adapted from Costa, A. and Garmston, R. *Cognitive Coaching: A Foundation for Renaissance Schools*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers, Inc., 1994.

Step 1: Collaborative Planning Conference Directions

Possible Purposes for Planning Conferences:

- **Orientation:** The mentor needs information prior to observing in the beginning teacher's classroom regarding: informal routines, location of supplies, rules/regulations, and/or procedures.
- **Concerns:** The mentor can identify the beginning teacher's stage of concern by getting a written statement about concerns or by talking with the beginning teacher. The mentor provides assistance based on the beginning teacher's stage of concern.
- **Instructional Improvement:** The focus for observations may be determined by the Formative Observation Data Analysis (FODA). However, research indicates that beginning teachers need help with discipline and classroom management, curriculum and lesson planning, and school routine.
- **Review of Progress:** The beginning teacher will need support in the form of recognition for what s/he is already doing well.

BEFORE the Planning Conference:

- The mentor should collect several possible data collection instruments to bring to the conference, a planning conference form, the log of activities form, and the beginning teacher self-assessment form.
- When setting up the conference, the mentor should consider the site and the physical arrangement of the site. The amount of time needed for a Planning Conference will depend on the degree of structure the mentor needs to use with the beginning teacher.
- The beginning teacher should bring a completed lesson plan to the conference.

The Planning Conference:

- May be formal or informal;
- The mentor should employ active listening skills and should be aware of messages his/her body language is conveying; and,
- Will focus on classroom observation as a means to gather data.

Recommended Planning Conference Agenda

1. Opening

2. Discussion of feelings/perceptions

Mentors ask beginning teachers to share feelings about being observed. At the beginning of a conference, a trusting relationship must be fostered if feelings are to be diffused. Mentors should remember to use active listening skills:

Use non-verbal body language to encourage the BT.

Use acknowledging responses.

Use encouraging phrases like, "Tell me more."

Paraphrase the content of what the BT has said.

Paraphrase the feelings the BT expresses.

Mentor shares his/her feelings about the coming observation.

3. Learning Outcomes

The mentor and the beginning teacher identify the specific learning outcomes of the lesson to be observed and the rationale for their selection. (Learning outcomes are those things the students know or can do at the end of the lesson.) The mentor probes, if necessary, to clarify the learning outcomes and the reasons they were selected. If the beginning teacher cannot state the learning outcomes, the mentor does. The mentor asks for the beginning teacher's plan or outline for the lesson to be observed.

4. Teaching Behavior Focus

The mentor and beginning teacher identify the teaching behavior on which the beginner wants data to be gathered. If the beginning teacher has difficulty selecting an appropriate behavior on which to focus, the mentor should assign one based on the observed needs of the beginning teacher. They should also discuss why the teaching behavior is important to promoting learning.

5. Data Collection

The mentor and beginning teacher select an appropriate way to gather data. Research has shown that beginning teachers experience difficulty in three areas:

- learning outcomes
- classroom management
- actual teaching practices

Therefore, in addition to the teaching behavior on which the mentor plans to collect data, the mentor tells the beginning teacher he/she will record data to answer three questions:

- Were the learning outcomes met?
- Did the classroom management interfere or support reaching the learning outcomes?
- What other teaching behaviors should/could the BT continue?

The mentor also uses this opportunity to ask about any other facts about the class (e.g., exceptional students, learning problems).

6. Ground Rules

The mentor reminds the beginning teacher that notes may be taken during the observation so that accurate data may be recorded and that the notes will be shared after the observation. The mentor should reiterate that the observation is a coaching tool, not an evaluation, and that it is confidential.

The mentor and the beginning teacher discuss where the mentor will sit during the observation. The mentor will not interact with the students but the beginning teacher may want to explain the mentor's presence to the class.

7. Follow-up

The mentor and beginning teacher set a meeting time for feedback. If possible this takes place the day after the observation but should occur within two days at most. The mentor gives the beginning teacher a self-assessment form to complete and bring to the Reflective Conference. **All steps of the Planning Conference do not need to be followed at every conference.** Example: If the mentor and beginning teacher are reviewing needs identified on the FODA then steps 1,3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 are the only necessary parts.

PLANNING CONFERENCE FORM	
Components	Documentation
1. Opening Begin the conference on a positive note and determine the purpose of the conference Ex. Today we are meeting to...	
2. Feelings <input type="checkbox"/> BT shares feelings <input type="checkbox"/> Mentor shares feelings	
3. Learning Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Learning outcomes discussed (goals and objectives) <input type="checkbox"/> Reasons for learning outcome as related to the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Review of lesson plan	
4. Teaching Behavior Focus of Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss instructional focus of observation, e.g. questioning <input type="checkbox"/> Reasons for selecting that instructional focus	
5. Data Collection <input type="checkbox"/> Select observation instrument <input type="checkbox"/> Explain that additional data will be collected on classroom management and general strengths or changes	
6. Ground Rules <input type="checkbox"/> Share notes <input type="checkbox"/> Logistics: Where should I sit? <input type="checkbox"/> Special circumstances?	
7. Follow-Up <input type="checkbox"/> Self-assessment form <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback date, place, time <input type="checkbox"/> Any questions?	

Adapted from Reiman, Alan J. and Lois Thies-Sprinthal. *Mentoring and Supervision for Teacher Development*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1998.

Beginning Teacher Observation Checklist

Directions to the beginning teacher: Run through this checklist a few days before and again the night prior to an observation to make sure you have covered all the bases!

The lesson plan:

- ☐ Do I have a "focus" activity?
- ☐ Is the introduction effective?
- ☐ Am I well-prepared?
- ☐ Do I have some variety in teaching techniques?
- ☐ Do I know the material well?
- ☐ Have I anticipated problems or questions students might have?
- ☐ Do I end the lesson with a review?
- ☐ Have I reviewed the principal's evaluation form to make sure my lesson plan meets his or her expectations?

What are the strengths of this lesson plan?

1.

2.

3.

What are the weaknesses?

1.

2.

How can I improve it?

My students:

- ☐ Are students enthusiastic about this material? Am I?
- ☐ Do I show I care about the students?
- ☐ Am I managing the classroom while teaching?
- ☐ Is the room neat and orderly? Do students behave while I'm talking?
- ☐ Are my students prepared for the lesson I'll be presenting?
- ☐ Are the students having fun while learning?

Myself:

- ☐ Do I have enthusiasm about this class? Do I show it?
- ☐ Do I welcome students by name as they come into the class?
- ☐ Do I have an upbeat, caring attitude?
- ☐ Am I having fun while teaching?
- ☐ Do I present a professional appearance to my students, principal, and colleagues?
- ☐ Will I get a good night's sleep the night before the observation?
- ☐ Will I have breakfast or lunch (or both) before the observation?

Step 2: Data Collection



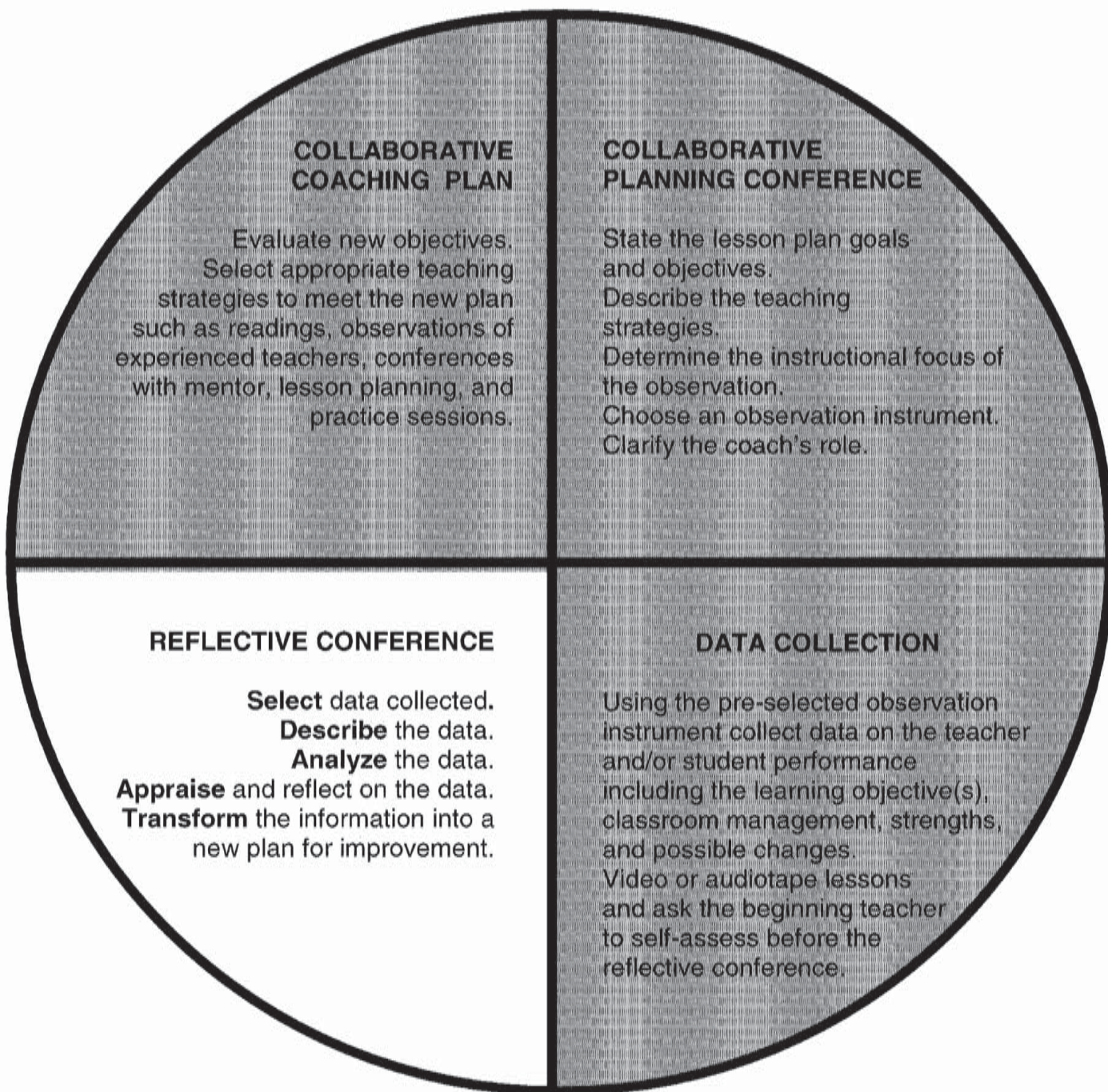
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Step 2: Data Collection

Directions

1. The mentor and beginning teacher should choose an instructional teaching behavior focus and data collection instrument that matches that instructional teaching behavior focus during the planning conference. Observing another teacher can be a great learning experience if there is purpose in the observation. The mentor's job is NOT to make judgments on what happens during the class session but to objectively record on the data collection instrument what happens in the class.
2. Some examples of instructional teaching behavior focuses include questioning, positive reinforcement, time on task, cooperative learning, teacher movement, teacher interaction with students, the execution of the steps in a lesson plan, and giving directions.
3. Initial observations and discussions using instruments that capture a wider span of classroom activities are suggested before becoming more focused on a desired area of instruction.
4. Typically the instructional teaching behavior focus and observations progress from a wide-lens qualitative instrument to a more narrow or quantitative instrument.
5. Video and audio recordings are suggested during observations so that the beginning teacher can use them to self-assess using a self-assessment form and/or a data collection instrument before the reflective conference.
6. Allow the beginning teacher time to self-assess before discussing the observation. Stick to the predetermined reflective conference date and time.
7. Different types of observation instruments will give different types of information so choose the instrument carefully. Some examples of general types of data collection instruments are verbatim (word for word), selective verbatim, checklists, categorical frequency counts, visual diagrams, and time or event coding.
8. This mentor manual includes information for beginning teachers on seven instructional strategies and examples of observational data collection instruments for mentors that match each instructional strategy. (See *Methods to Master* section.) Mentors have developed many of these data collection instruments and have found them invaluable in supporting beginning teachers.
 - Lesson Planning
 - Effective Questioning
 - Positive Reinforcement
 - Multiple Intelligences
 - Management of Student Behavior
 - Parent Communication
 - Time Management

Step 3: Reflective Conference



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Step 3: Reflective Conference Form

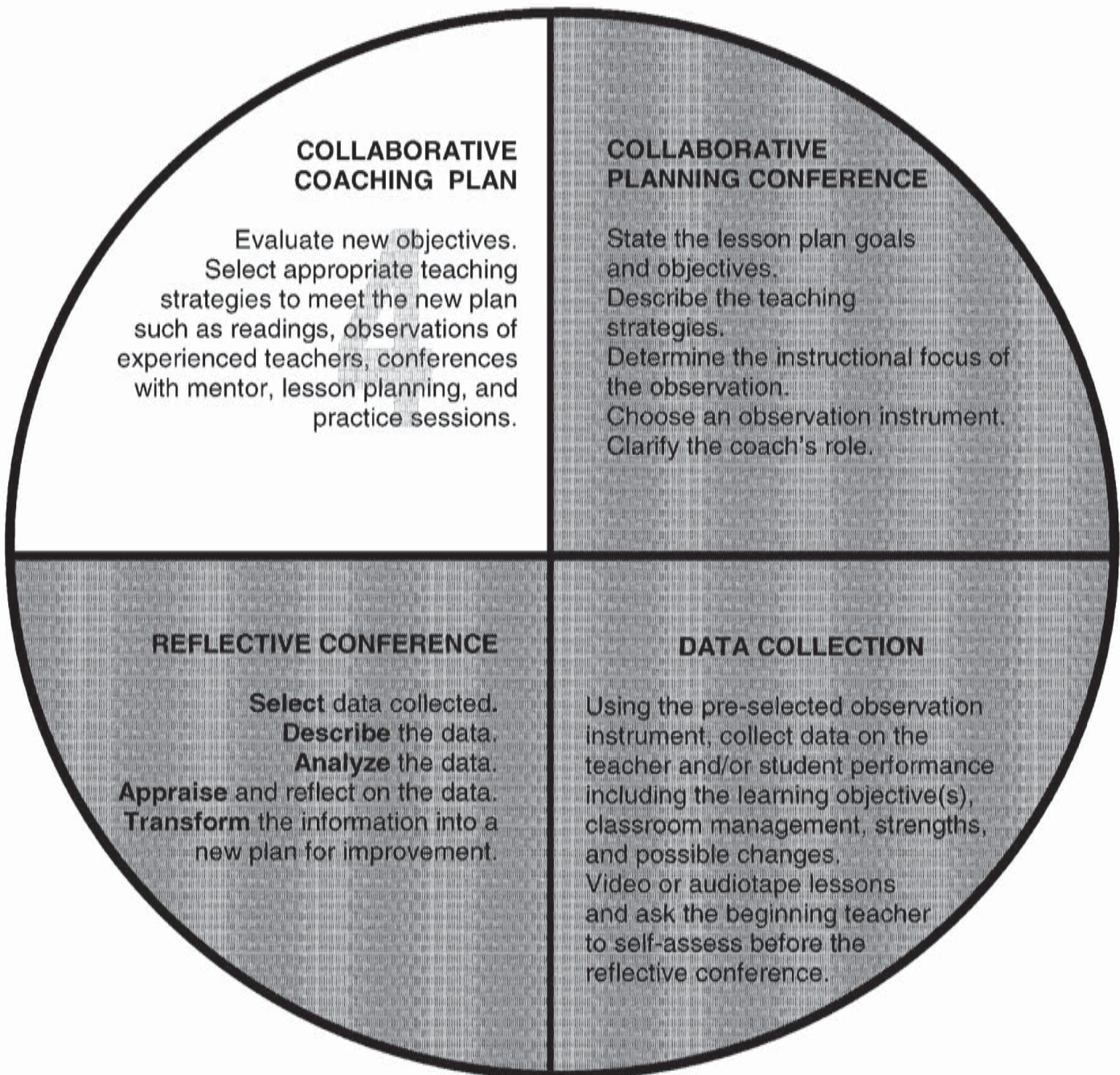
Use this form as a guide and as a documentation tool for the discussion that should occur during the post-observation conference.

BT _____ Date _____

Focus of Observation _____

1. How do you feel about the way the class went?
2. What steps did you take to meet the goal of this coaching cycle?
3. How do you know if the goal was met (or not met)?
4. Discuss the mentor's data collection.
5. Does the data show that the goal was met?
6. How could the focus have been better accomplished?
7. What other strengths or weaknesses does the data reveal?
8. Was the goal of this coaching cycle met?
9. What should be the next coaching focus?

Step 4: Collaborative Coaching Plan



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Use the following form to develop a coaching plan for *one* focus area of concentration. The mentor and BT should determine this area of focus jointly during the reflection stage. In the collaborative coaching step, a plan of action is actually designed for the BT. (When writing the plan of action, all 4 steps may not be necessary.) Use this form as documentation.

Step 4: Collaborative Coaching Plan Format

<u>List Strengths.</u> (e.g., allows sufficient wait time, superior content knowledge)	
<u>Select a focus area for improvement.</u> Write as a teaching outcome.	
<u>Make a Plan of Action.</u> List strategies to improve this skill.	Mentor Follow up And Dates
1. Read, review, and or discuss the following:	
2. Observe: Use designated observation instruments.	
3. Practice the skill in the following ways:	
4. Demonstrate successful understanding of the skill by:	
Time Needed:	
Resources Needed:	

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